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For Immediate Release

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October 3, 2012

Wisconsin Receives Funding for "Supporting Parents Supporting Kids" Initiative
Will Also Lead National Efforts to Evaluate Other States' Initiatives

MADISON.....Today, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) announced they will receive \$2.6 million in federal grant and matching funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to implement an innovative new program called "Supporting Parents Supporting Kids". The five-year initiative will provide non-custodial parents in Brown and Kenosha counties with specialized services to help them support their families.

"The Department is very excited to launch our Supporting Parents Supporting Kids initiative. Child support is a critical financial resource for children living apart from their parents," said Eloise Anderson, Secretary of the Department of Children and Families. "Kids whose parents make timely child support payments are typically healthier, have fewer behavioral problems, make better grades and stay in school longer. Nothing any government program can do improves a child's family environment more than having two involved parents supporting the child, both financially and socially."

The goals of the program are to: improve the reliable payment of child support to improve child-well being and decrease reliance on public assistance programs; improve coordination of child support, employment and parenting services between state and local agencies; and determine the most impactful and cost effective way to deliver services to non-custodial parents.

"Helping parents pay timely child support not only improves the lives of their children, but also saves taxpayer dollars by reducing dependence on government assistance," said Anderson. "This ultimately benefits all Wisconsin citizens and our state's economy."

Under the grant, the Department will provide non-custodial parents in Brown and Kenosha counties with comprehensive case management, job skills, fatherhood/parenting activities and will safeguard families through a domestic violence plan. Services will be targeted towards parents with child support cases in which there has been: no payment in the last year or since the child support order was entered; payments have been 50 percent or less than the ordered amount; and parents who are unemployed, underemployed, recently incarcerated, or referred by other community agencies.

"These two counties were chosen due to their willingness to participate in the project and the availability of a broad social service system in the county," said Anderson. "If successful, this program can be implemented in all of Wisconsin and be used as a model for other states."

Wisconsin is one of eight states to receive funding as part of a national effort to provide services to non-custodial parents through the National Child Support Non-custodial Parent Employment Demonstration Project. Wisconsin was chosen to manage the evaluation of the national project and will receive \$13.165 in federal grant and matching funds.